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# **Sub-state national identities among minority groups in Britain: a comparative analysis of 2011 Census data**

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## ***Abstract***

Using data from a new question in the 2011 UK census, national identities across minority ethno-religious groups in England, Wales and Scotland are compared. The findings substantiate earlier work showing high levels of British identification among minority groups, but also demonstrate that this does not extend to sub-state national identities. The extent of sub-state national identification varies between different minorities, but the nature of this variation also depends on the specific (sub-state) national context. The findings may be understood in relation to key biographical 'markers' of national identity. These markers help explain variations in sub-state national identities to a much greater extent than British identity, but their effect also varies across the different nations. The analysis demonstrates the importance of examining sub-state as well as state (British) identities, and heeding differences in the ways in which these identities might be conceived and asserted across national borders within the same state.

## ***Keywords***

Britain; census; national identities; minorities; ethnicity; religion

## ***Word count***

8,094 (including notes and references, excluding tables)

## **Sub-state national identities among minority groups in Britain: a comparative analysis of 2011 Census data**

The 2011 UK population censuses in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland included for the first time a question on national identity. While many social and political surveys in the UK have included questions about national identity, these typically include only small numbers of people in minority ethnic and religious groups living outside England. Data from the 2011 census therefore offer an unprecedented opportunity to rigorously compare the national identities of those belonging to various minority groups in different parts of the UK. Previous UK quantitative research has also predominantly addressed identification as *British* rather than sub-state (English, Welsh, Scottish) national identities among ethnic and religious minorities. This is surprising given the prevalence of these identities among the wider population. As well as expanding the scope of investigation to include England, Scotland and Wales, this paper also aims to address this deficit by comparing sub-state national identification among minority groups in these different parts of the UK. Relevant previous research – both quantitative and qualitative – is discussed before the data and analysis are explained and presented.

### *National identities, minorities and the UK Censuses*

Jenkins argues that individual and collective identities are constituted via a process that he terms ‘the internal-external dialectic of identification’ (2014: 42-3). More specifically, we may understand national identities in a similar manner: they are both self-conceived and externally-influenced (Bond 2006). Individuals

have agency over their own identities but this is limited by the personal markers on which they may base a claim to a national identity (Kiely et al, 2001); their perception of the nature of that identity and whether or not they can (or want to) include themselves in it; and their anticipation of whether or not others would be likely to include them. While markers of national identity such as physical appearance, socialization, accent, or dress might be significant (see e.g. Kiely et al 2001; Virdee et al 2006), previous research suggests that three particular biographical markers – birthplace, ancestry and residence ('birth, blood and belonging') – are fundamental (Kiely et al 2001, 2005; McCrone et al 1998). Therefore, compared to those in the national majority, for people who lack one or more of these markers in a particular national context (such as those in minority ethnic or national groups) claiming a national identity is likely to be more problematic.

These are key issues to bear in mind when examining statistical data on people's national identities. Although a question on subjective national identity was introduced to the UK census for the first time in 2011, some UK surveys based on population samples have consistently included questions on national identity, and some research based on these sources has more specifically addressed the national identities of those in minority groups. Karlsen and Nazroo (2015) used Citizenship Survey data for England and Wales to explore associations between minority ethnicity and belonging to Britain, with a particular focus on Muslims. Their findings demonstrate high levels of belonging to Britain among minority ethno-religious groups generally and, contrary to much political rhetoric, show that if anything Muslims feel they belong to Britain *more* strongly than other minorities. They also show that birthplace and perceived levels of institutional

discrimination against minorities also influence national belonging. Earlier analysis of Citizenship Survey data (Maxwell 2006) similarly shows that Muslims, and indeed other prominent non-Christian groups mainly originating from South Asia, exhibit relatively strong levels of British identification, and that perceived discrimination may have a negative effect upon this identification.

Both Platt (2014) and Heath and Demireva (2014) employ data from the 2010 Ethnic Minority British Election Survey, with Platt primarily and Heath and Demireva partly addressing the issue of British identification among minority ethno-religious groups. They also find that levels of British identification are high, especially among individuals born in Britain, and that Muslim groups are comparatively likely to identify as British. Similarly to Maxwell (2006), they also show that even those not born in Britain often show a strong affinity to the country, especially those who have lived there for a considerable period of time.

But this survey-based research shares a particular focus on national identification at the *state* level of Britishness, rather than the *sub-state* level. It addresses whether people in minority ethnic and religious groups feel they belong to Britain and/or identify as British, but not whether they identify as, for example, *English*. Moreover, the multinational nature of the UK is not only rather neglected in this respect, but also in a comparative sense. Data are not differentiated by sub-state national territories, and thus do not show how British or sub-state (English, Welsh, Scottish) identification among minority groups might vary across these territories.

An important exception is Nandi and Platt's (2015) work, which uses data from the Understanding Society survey to assess and compare state and sub-state

national identification among minority groups in the UK. They again establish that levels of British identification among minorities (most obviously, but not exclusively, those born in Britain) compare well with the White majority, among whom exclusive *sub*-state national identification (e.g. as English) is more common. However, while they conclude that ‘country-level [*i.e. sub-state*] identities ... can be considered more ethnic than civic national identities’ (2015: 2630), whether this applies across the different national territories of the UK is uncertain since the data are not differentiated on that basis. It is also unclear whether the number of cases is sufficiently large in each UK nation to support comparative analysis across these nations.

The absence of such comparative analysis is significant considering other research evidence on sub-state national identification among minority groups in different parts of Britain. The relatively small number of relevant quantitative studies have indicated a reluctance among people in minority ethnic and religious groups in England to identify as English as opposed to British (Bond 2011; Curtice and Heath 2000). Qualitative research, for example among young Muslims in the north of England, similarly demonstrates high levels of British identification and more negative attitudes towards Englishness (Thomas and Sanderson 2011). Qualitative research which predominantly focuses on the White majority in England (Leddy-Owen 2013, 2014) also suggests that while the White majority may not explicitly associate Englishness with whiteness, there is an implicit ethnicizing of English identity that does not apply to Britishness: skin colour and ancestry are important markers of English national identity. Fenton and Mann (2011: 226-7) similarly conclude that ‘... with respect

to the distinction between Englishness and Britishness, whiteness appears important’.

However, not all qualitative research in England has arrived at similar conclusions. While some have associated English and British identities with ethnic and civic national ideal types respectively (Leddy-Owen 2013), Condor and her colleagues (Condor et al 2006) argue that this is overly simplistic because Englishness and Britishness will be understood and employed contextually in ways that represent both these ideal types. Whether non-identification as English among ethnic minorities should be understood as a form of exclusion and if so what might be the consequences of such exclusion has also been debated. Condor et al (2006: 140) argue that reluctance to identify as English among minorities should not be interpreted as a sense of ‘exclusion’, but an ‘autonomous ethnic preference’. A related argument proposes that if Englishness is understood not as a *national* identity but as an *ethnic* identity existing under the broader umbrella of a civic Britishness that includes all ethnic groups, then the association of Englishness with whiteness is not necessarily problematic (Fenton and Mann 2011; Leddy-Owen 2014; Mann 2011). Condor et al (2006: 152-3) and Fenton (2011: 15) also caution against the conflation of ‘symbolic’ exclusion associated with national identities and *social* exclusion, with its attendant material consequences.

Against this, we might argue that even purely ‘symbolic’ exclusion is negative in that it effectively curtails individuals’ autonomy to identify with national collectivities to which they should feel they have a right to belong on the basis of, e.g. birthplace and residence: ‘... large numbers of the English population who

identify – or wish to identify – as English feel actively excluded from the category because they are not white’ (Leddy-Owen 2014: 1464). Further, to observe that symbolic and social exclusion are not coterminous does not necessarily imply that symbolic exclusion is not consequential for social exclusion. Leddy-Owen, for example, argues that the predominant construction of Englishness as ‘normatively white’ suggest it is a ‘kind of exclusionary, fixed racialised identity [that] has a clear potential for social exclusion and social harm’ (2013: 5.1). This would seem to be supported by the negative association between national identification and perceptions of discrimination among people in minority groups (Karlsen and Nazroo 2015; Maxwell 2006). Finally, even if we broadly accept that ‘rather than ‘housing diversity’, the category English is treated as one of the many other ethnicities within a multiethnic national space’ (Mann 2011: 125), this leaves some sociological puzzles.

First, why should Britishness be privileged as ‘the’ national space within which Englishness is accommodated as one of many ethnic identities if, as we shall see, when asked to state their *national* identity, many people in England favour Englishness rather than Britishness? Second, why, within some other UK territories, might *sub-state* national identities seem better equipped to ‘house diversity’ and include (non-White) minorities? Evidence from Wales is rather scarce in this regard. Notwithstanding political initiatives to promote an inclusive Welsh national identity (Chaney and Fevre 2001; Evans et al 2015) some argue that the importance of language and culture to Welsh identity makes it more difficult for ethnic minorities to identify as Welsh (Scourfield and Davies 2005; Williams 1999). But a substantial body of qualitative research in Scotland (Bonino 2015; Hopkins 2004, 2007, 2008; Kyriakides et al 2009; Saeed et al



1999; Virdee et al 2006) and the limited quantitative work that has addressed the national identities of minorities there (Hussain and Miller 2006; Rosie and Hepburn 2015) suggests that Scottishness may be relatively inclusive of those in minority ethnic and religious groups.

Evidence from Scotland thus suggests that Britishness is not the only potentially ethnically-inclusive national identity in the UK, even though the majority of relevant research focuses solely on British identification among minorities. However, many of the claims regarding national identification among people in minority groups in Scotland are also based on somewhat limited evidence, mainly focused on small-scale qualitative research in specific places and/or with specific minority groups, or rare quantitative research with low sample sizes and/or addressing particular groups. The 2011 census data offer a broader and more reliable basis for the analysis of national identities among minority groups across the population of Scotland as a whole, and for comparison with similar groups in other parts of Britain.

Just as Renan (1994) [1882] described the nation as a 'daily plebiscite', Kertzer and Arel (2002: 20) propose that 'since identity is subjective and contingent upon social and political factors, one wonders whether it would not be more fruitful to view the census – or, at least, the identity questions of the census – as a type of plebiscite'. Unlike Renan's formulation, the UK national census is a rare rather than daily event, usually taking place every ten years. UK Census questions therefore inevitably evolve slowly, and part of this evolution in recent decades has concerned the introduction of the kind of questions to which Kertzer and Arel refer: those concerning subjective (ethnic, religious, national) identities.

Such questions were largely absent from the UK censuses until the late twentieth century<sup>1</sup>. A question on ethnicity was first introduced in the 1991 census and this was followed by the inclusion of a question on religion in all parts of the UK for the first time in 2001<sup>2</sup>, and the new national identity question in 2011. Material related to the perceived need for, and development of, this question suggests that its primary aim was to improve people's capacity to record their ethnonational identification (Office for National Statistics 2009; Scottish Government and General Register Office for Scotland 2008).

Because the census attempts to represent the whole population, it avoids the problem of investigating national identities among ethnic and religious minorities which form only a very small part of the population and are thus very weakly represented in sample surveys, especially in UK territories outside England. Census data thus allows us to address a number of relatively neglected questions. How do sub-state (English, Welsh, Scottish) national identities among minority groups within each nation compare with the British identification that has been the focus of most previous research in this area? To what extent do census data support previous (mainly qualitative) research, for example in showing that whiteness is central to Englishness and/or that Scottish identity is inclusive of those in ethnic and religious minorities? How do patterns of national identities across specific minority groups compare between different UK nations, and what might be the key factors underlying these identities?

#### *Outline of data and methods*

Although national identities may be investigated to some extent using published aggregate census data, these have limitations. Generally, aggregate data do not allow further manipulation (e.g. to select specific cases or create new variables) or more complex multivariate statistical analysis. More specifically regarding analysis of national identities, the census records these identities for each member of the population, regardless of age. It therefore seems inevitable that for many non-adults the data will not reflect an individual's own subjective identification but rather a category assigned or influenced by a parent or guardian. Applying a suitable age threshold for the legitimate expression of subjective identities is difficult and available guidance varies (see e.g. Parameshwaran and Engzell 2015), but it certainly seems important to distinguish between data on national identity that is likely to be autonomously derived and that which is more likely to be 'proxy' in nature. Published aggregate data do not allow for this.

Analysis therefore used microdata: a random 5 per cent sample of census returns, published separately for England and Wales and Scotland via the UK Data Service by the Office for National Statistics (2014) and the National Records of Scotland (2015). To address 'proxy' national identities, only cases aged sixteen and over were included, yielding total adult sample sizes of 2,185,090 in England, 127,081 in Wales and 220,865 in Scotland. To exemplify the scale of these samples relative to those found in even the largest sample surveys, we may compare the UK Annual Population Survey (APS), which aggregates Labour Force Survey data and also includes a question on national identity. The most recently available APS at the time of writing (April 2014-March 2015), even though having an extremely large number of cases by the standard of sample

surveys, still has only 33,875 adult cases in Scotland and 29,345 in Wales. This has very substantial implications for the number of cases in minority groups. For example, even among some of the larger ethnic groups, in Scotland the census microdata contains nearly 1,500 adult Chinese cases, compared to only 60 in the APS; or in Wales there are 375 adult Pakistanis in the census microdata compared to 52 in the APS. Such differences have a huge impact on the reliability of multivariate analysis of data pertaining to minority groups, especially in Wales and Scotland. Northern Ireland was not included in the analysis, principally because total numbers in minority groups are much smaller even than in Scotland and Wales, and the Northern Ireland census microdata only distinguishes between White and Other ethnic groups.

Although the census ostensibly covers the whole population, some consideration should also be given to response rate. The ONS target in England and Wales, for example, was not 100 per cent but 94 per cent, which was achieved (Office for National Statistics 2012: 2). This response rate compares very favourably even with major public surveys: to take just one example of a survey that has been used to analyse national identities, in the first wave of Understanding Society (2009-10) household response rate was 57 per cent among the general population sample and 40 per cent for the ethnic minority boost sample (National Centre for Social Research 2012: 36). The census response also represents a proportion of the entire population rather than just a small sample of it, and although response was somewhat lower among some minority ethnic groups, rates among the largest of these (Indians and Pakistanis) were close to 94 per cent and for most other minority groups they exceeded 80 per cent (Office for National Statistics 2012: 6). Since these rates are considerably higher

than those typically achieved in sample surveys, and because they represent proportions of the whole population, we can have a relatively high degree of confidence in the extent to which they are representative of majority and minority populations. This can also be said of the microdata, which is based on a stratified random sample, designed to be proportionately representative of the population<sup>3</sup>.

The key dependent variables were based on the single census question on national identity. It should be noted that the wording of this question was similar but subtly different in Scotland ('What do you feel is your national identity?') compared to England and Wales ('How would you describe your national identity?'). Response options were also similar but varied according to national territory. English was the first option offered in England, Welsh in Wales and Scottish in Scotland, and British was the final explicit option in each. An 'Other' option to write in a different (or additional) national identity was also offered. Although the instructions explicitly encouraged participants to select more than one option if appropriate, in each nation a large majority chose one national identity only. Simple binary dependent variables are therefore used for each national identity to indicate whether people recorded that identity or not.

In selecting the explanatory variables, it is clearly important that ethnicity and religion are included given the paper's key focus on national identities among (ethnic and religious) minorities. These variables are also indicators of ancestry, which, as discussed above is one of the key biographical markers of national identity. Rather than including these variables separately, combined ethno-religious groups are used. This allows us to reflect the religious diversity within

some minority ethnic groups while also taking into account the homogeneity of others (see e.g. Heath and Demireva 2014; Nandi and Platt 2015). For example, since the vast majority of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in the UK are Muslim, for these groups adding religion separately adds little to the analysis. This approach also allows comparison with other recent UK research on national identification among minority groups, which has also used a combined ethno-religious explanatory variable (Karlsen and Nazroo 2015; Nandi and Platt 2015; Platt 2014). The other principal markers of national identity – birthplace and residence – were also included as a composite explanatory variable using the questions on country of birth and (for migrants from outside the UK) year of most recent UK arrival, from which approximate period of residence was derived. The inclusion of birthplace is also clearly important given that, as noted above, its significance has been highlighted by previous quantitative analysis of national identities in the UK (Heath and Demireva 2014; Karlsen and Nazroo 2015; Nandi and Platt 2015; Platt 2014). Similarly, previous research on British (Platt 2014) and Scottish national identities (Bond 2006) has indicated that for migrants, period of residence influences degree of identification.

Since the Welsh language is an important element of Welsh national identity which, it has been argued, might differentially exclude those from minority ethnic backgrounds (Williams 1999: 86-7), for Wales self-perceived proficiency in Welsh was included as an explanatory variable, using a composite variable based on questions regarding ability to understand, read, speak and/or write the language. Although not widely spoken in Scotland, Scottish Gaelic is unique to the nation, as is the more commonly used (albeit less clearly defined) Scots language. Considering this, and the wider centrality of language to national

identity (see e.g. Brubaker 2013: 3; Miller 1995: 23, 33) a similar approach was taken in Scotland, using data from questions on Gaelic and Scots languages. That proficiency in English might be related to English national identity was also considered, but since the census in England only assessed this for people whose main language was not English, including this variable would have excluded large numbers of people in minority groups. Preliminary analysis also showed no positive correlation between proficiency in English and identification as English.

Some broader demographic and socioeconomic variables were taken into account. (Occupational) social class was included as an explanatory variable because previous research (Maxwell 2006; Nandi and Platt 2015) has observed that socio-economic status may be associated with degree of national identification. Finally, age was included because other work on national identities among minorities has found that this may be a significant variable (Karlsen and Nazroo 2015; Maxwell 2006) or should be controlled for since the age distributions of minority populations born in the UK and overseas differ (Platt 2014: 52-3). Some UK research on national identities among the population more generally has also found age-related variations in British and sub-state national identities (see e.g. Heath et al 1999).

### *Comparing British and sub-state identities*

Before presenting more complex models which control for the effects of the other key explanatory variables outlined above, Table 1 simply shows how both British and sub-state identities vary across the different ethno-religious groups in the three nations. The White British etc. group also includes those who

identify as White English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish. The remaining groups reflect the most substantial ethno-religious minorities and only a very small proportion of cases have been excluded, most prominently those in unspecified 'Other' ethnic groups. As far as possible, the same groups have also been used in each nation in order to facilitate comparison. This has entailed combining some (similar) sub-groups because of relatively low sub-sample sizes in Wales and Scotland. The Mixed group was undifferentiated in the Scottish data whereas figures for the different Mixed groups in England and Wales are shown separately, and in Scotland the African and Caribbean groups were not designated as Black.

*Table 1 here*

The table shows a number of similarities across all three nations with respect to both British and sub-state national identities. First, the White minorities are less likely than the White majority to see themselves as British or (more markedly) to record a sub-state national identity. Second, those in Mixed ethnic groups are more likely than the White majority to see themselves as British but much less likely to identify with the sub-state nation, with the exception of those Mixed groups in Wales which do not differ significantly from the majority. Total levels of British and sub-state national identification for all Mixed groups combined are also quite similar in the three nations. Third, those in non-White groups are particularly unlikely to identify as English, Welsh or Scottish compared to the White majority.

There are however some notable contrasts across the three nations. First, compared to England and Scotland, sub-state national identities among the



White majority are considerably less common in Wales. This largely relates to the 23 per cent of adults living in Wales who were born in England: 88 per cent of those in the White British etc. group in Wales who were also born in Wales identify as Welsh, compared to only 11 per cent of people in this group who were born in England. Second, while there is clear variation in British identification between the various non-White minority groups in each nation, there is also variation across the nations. For most of these non-White groups, British identities are more common in Wales and (especially) in England than in Scotland. Third, while again there is evident variation in sub-state national identities between White and non-White minority groups within each nation, with only two (non-significant) exceptions people in these minority groups are clearly more likely (often markedly so) to identify as Scottish than to see themselves as English or Welsh.

Overall then, these data suggest that even though much work on national identity in the UK focuses on Britishness, in fact among the White majority sub-state national identities might be much more prominent. The relative proclivity of people in (especially non-White) minority groups to identify as British, as highlighted in previous research, is confirmed. Studies which have indicated the apparent 'ethnicization' of Englishness are also substantiated, and it seems that this can also be extended to Welsh identity. Clearly, ancestry is important for sub-state national identification in England and Wales but much less so for Britishness. While the evidence also tends to support work which has suggested that Scottish identity may be *relatively* inclusive of those in minority groups, some caution is certainly required here. People in minority groups are still much less likely to see themselves as Scottish than are the White majority; in none of

these groups (with the marginal exception of those with Mixed ethnicity) do a majority identify as Scottish; and in some groups only a small minority do so. Identification as *British* is also more common than Scottish identity in most non-White minority groups.

#### *Further exploring sub-state national identities*

Tables 2-4 present binary logistic regression models which, as well as ethno-religious group, also include the other explanatory variables outlined above. This allows us to assess the extent to which variation in identities between different groups shown in Table 1 might be related to other key markers of national identity such as birthplace, and to investigate how these other variables might themselves be associated with national identification.

Because most previous relevant quantitative research has addressed British identification (and data shown in Table 1 seem to confirm the findings of that research), only sub-state national identities are modelled as dependent variables. Binary logistic regression is appropriate because these dependent variables simply reflect, respectively, whether or not English (Table 2), Welsh (Table 3) or Scottish (Table 4) national identity was chosen. All explanatory variables with the exception of age are categorical, and the reference category for each is shown in brackets. For these variables the number of respondents in each sub-category is also shown to highlight any potential issues with low sub-sample sizes. Odds ratios are shown to indicate variation in national identities across categories. The further these ratios deviate from 1, the greater the difference in levels of identification between that category and the reference

category. Odds ratios greater than 1 indicate that people in that category are more likely to identify as English etc. compared to people in the reference category for that variable, and odds ratios less than 1 show the reverse. For the age variable the odds ratios show the effects of a one unit increase in age, controlling for the other explanatory variables: e.g. an odds ratio greater than 1 shows that older people are more likely to identify as English. The 95 per cent confidence intervals are also shown for each odds ratio. Where these do not overlap with 1, this indicates that differences are statistically significant at a level of  $p < 0.05$ . The breadth of the confidence intervals also reflects the number of cases in each sub-category.

The  $R^2$  values for the models may be interpreted as indicating the extent to which the explanatory variables collectively account for variation in identification as English, Welsh or Scottish. These may range potentially from 0 to 1, with values closer to 0 indicating weaker explanatory value. In addition, explanatory variables were entered in steps, beginning with ethno-religious group, followed by birth/residence, age, social class, and finally (for Wales and Scotland only) language proficiency. In doing this the increase in  $R^2$  at each step indicates the extent to which the addition of the relevant variable(s) adds to the explanation of variation in national identities.

*Tables 2-4 here*

Once more there are a number of broad similarities in the findings across the three nations, but also some subtle and important differences. The  $R^2$  values indicate that together the explanatory variables account for a considerable amount of the variation in sub-state national identities in each nation<sup>4</sup>. Even

when we control for the effects of all explanatory variables, the general finding shown in Table 1 is sustained: compared to the White majority, people in (virtually) all minority groups across all three nations are considerably less likely to record a sub-state national identity. This difference is least marked among the Mixed groups, and indeed in Wales we can observe the only two examples of minority groups that are not significantly less likely to have a sub-state national identity than the White majority: the Mixed White/Black Caribbean and White/Black African groups. In both Wales and England among all minorities the Mixed White/Black Caribbean group also shows the highest levels of Welsh or English identification relative to the White majority. But even beyond the Mixed groups, the odds ratios in all three nations show substantial variation in identities between the various minority groups. Hence, even when accounting for other key differences in, e.g. birthplace and period of UK residence, the specific nature of ethno-religious background (and thus ancestry) among people in minority groups is significant for national identification.

The effects of country of birth and period of UK residence are themselves broadly consistent across the nations. The centrality of birthplace is evident: those who were born in one UK nation and now live in another are very unlikely to claim the national identity of that territory compared to those who were born there. This is also clearly true of migrants from outside the UK. Length of residence is not insignificant – generally speaking, longer-term UK residents are more likely to see themselves as English, Welsh or Scottish compared to more recently arrived migrants – but compared to those born in Scotland, England or Wales, all migrants are very unlikely to identify with the sub-state nation.

Social class also has a significant and broadly similar effect in all three nations, albeit less marked than the other variables discussed thus far: adding social class to the models in each nation increases the value of  $R^2$  only very marginally compared to ethno-religious group and the birth/residence variable (see below). Compared to those in higher managerial and professional groups, people in all other class categories are more likely to identify with the sub-state nation (although not significantly so for the lower managerial/professional group in Wales), and this is particularly true of those in more working-class categories.

The effect of language in Wales and Scotland is consistent with what we might have anticipated. Any self-perceived proficiency in Welsh, Gaelic or Scots is positively associated with sub-state national identification, and for Welsh and Scots this effect is most marked among the most proficient. However, once more compared to the other key markers of national identity reflecting ancestry and birthplace, the increase in  $R^2$  is fairly marginal, suggesting that language proficiency does not help explain variations in national identity very much once other key explanatory variables are taken into account.

But despite these overall consistencies, we may also identify at least four interesting differences between the nations. The first concerns the extent to which (especially non-Mixed) minority groups differ from the White majority in their degree of sub-state national identification. The data show that in England people in each of these groups are particularly unlikely to identify with the sub-state nation. This is also reflected in the importance of the ethno-religious variable to the overall model for English identity relative to Welsh and Scottish identities. The value of  $R^2$  when this is entered as the sole explanatory variable in

England is 0.383, compared to 0.108 and 0.218 in Wales and Scotland respectively.

In more detail, the relative reluctance of people in minority groups in England to identify with the sub-state national identity can perhaps be observed most clearly in a comparison with parallel groups in Scotland: for each (White and non-White) minority the odds ratio in Scotland is much higher than for its counterpart in England, and indeed even the highest odds ratio for any such group in England (Black Caribbean or Other Black: No religion) exceeds the odds ratio for only one in Scotland (Bangladeshi Muslim). A similar comparison with Wales also suggests that for nearly all minority groups the likelihood of sub-state national identification is higher than the parallel group in England, although for most it is also lower than Scotland. This also suggests that, to some extent at least, the relative inclusivity of Scottish identity holds across the various minority groups.

A second interesting difference between nations lies in the nature of the variation in sub-state national identification between minority groups. For example, while Arab Muslims in Scotland and Indian or Other Asian Muslims in Wales show high levels of sub-state identification relative to other minorities, this is not the case in the other nations. Similarly, people in the Indian or Other Asian Sikh group are among the least likely to identify as English and Welsh but among the most likely to identify as Scottish. While sub-sample sizes of these groups outside England suggest some caution, these findings nevertheless indicate that specific sub-state contexts might be influential in understanding national identities among specific ethno-religious groups.

Thirdly, although the nature of the effects of birthplace and period of residence are similar across the three nations, there are some interesting differences in the degree of these effects. Birthplace is especially central to Welsh identity. Adding the birth/residence variable as the second step in the Wales model increases  $R^2$  very markedly from 0.108 to 0.624 – easily the most substantial effect of adding any variable to any of the models. A more detailed examination of the odds ratios for Wales shows that even quite long-term UK residents who were not born in Wales are much less likely to record a sub-state national identity than similar migrants in England and Scotland. However, in Scotland birthplace also clearly makes the largest contribution to explaining variation in national identities. Adding the birth/residence variable increases  $R^2$  from 0.218 to 0.563, and more detailed examination of the odds ratios suggests that even very long-term residents who were not born in the UK are much less likely to identify as Scottish compared to those born in Scotland. Although, as we have seen, in England ethno-religious group makes the largest contribution to the  $R^2$  value, perhaps surprisingly, Englishness seems the most amenable to a process of assuming national identity based on residence rather than birth: in most categories of residence for migrants the odds ratios for England are higher than in parallel groups in Scotland.

A final difference concerns the effects of age. In Scotland, older people are less likely to claim a sub-state national identity, but the opposite is true in England. However, it should be noted that in all three nations adding the age variable has only a very marginal effect on the  $R^2$  value once ethno-religious group, birthplace and period of residence have been taken into account, and indeed in Wales the effect of age is not statistically significant.

## *Discussion and Conclusion*

Nandi and Platt have observed that ‘Minorities are ... largely signed up to the ‘national story’ represented by *British* identity’ (2015: 2630, emphasis added), while also conceding that the extent to which the majority population identifies with the *sub-state* nations of Britain raises questions about the coherence of this ‘story’. While some quantitative research has addressed British identification among UK minorities, the comparative neglect of sub-state national identities and the alternative ‘narrative’ they might represent for minorities (Whittaker 2015: 390; Williams 2015: 332) is significant given the prominence of these identities in the wider population. Particularly in Wales and Scotland, a key reason for this has been the absence of adequate data, which is why the introduction of a census question on national identity has been such a significant development.

By using the data arising from this question, this paper has built on previous research while adding substantial new insights. The findings substantiate earlier work (Karlsen and Nazroo 2015; Nandi and Platt 2015; Platt 2014) in showing that many minority groups exhibit high levels of British identification, but also demonstrate that this does not extend to sub-state identification. The analysis also showed that the heterogeneity evident in British identification between different minority groups largely located in England (Karlsen and Nazroo 2015; Nandi and Platt 2015; Platt 2014) is also evident for sub-state identities among minorities across Britain, and that the nature of this heterogeneity also depends to some extent on the specific (sub-state) national context.



The findings may be understood in relation to the key biographical ‘markers’ (Kiely et al, 2001) of national identity outlined earlier. Significantly, it is clear that these markers help us explain variations in sub-state national identities to a much greater extent than British identity, but, equally significantly, the effect of these markers varies across the different nations, showing the value of the unprecedented comparative analysis that has been presented. If ethno-religious group is taken to be an indicator of ancestry, then particularly in England this marker appears central to sub-state (English) national identity. This suggests the findings of qualitative research (e.g. Thomas and Sanderson 2011; Leddy-Owen 2014) may be extended to the population of England more widely. But perhaps more surprisingly, period of residence may be a more important marker of English identity than the other sub-state national identities. Birthplace has previously been established as an important factor in British identification for minorities (Karlsen and Nazroo 2015; Nandi and Platt 2015; Platt 2014) and, together with ethnicity, it also contributes most to understanding variation in sub-state national identities in all three nations. But the analysis also transcends previous research in showing that being born in Wales is especially central to Welsh identity. Similarly, while this paper confirms the findings of previous qualitative research (Kiely et al 2001, 2005) in showing the importance of birthplace for Scottish identity, it also highlights that although in some respects Scottish identity is *relatively* inclusive of minorities, this is not true to the extent that we might have expected from previous smaller scale research in Scotland.

These findings are sustained even when we control for other factors that are likely to influence national identity, but the effects of these factors are themselves noteworthy. In all three nations those in more working class groups

were more likely to record a sub-state identity. While the analysis by no means suggests a widespread disassociation from Englishness among the middle-class, which was a key finding of Mann's (2012) qualitative research, Mann's findings do suggest some explanation for class variation in identities in England at least. While people in Wales and Scotland who have self-perceived proficiency in Welsh, Gaelic and/or Scots language were also more likely to assert a sub-state national identity, one might question the causal direction of this association. There is a subjective element in the self-evaluation of linguistic skills and it may be that those who feel more strongly Welsh or Scottish are more likely to assess positively their abilities in the respective national languages. Further, the analysis suggests that compared to the key markers of national identity, class and language add comparatively little to our capacity to explain variation in sub-state national identities. This is also true of people's age, which also had rather different associations with national identities in England and Scotland and no significant effect in Wales.

The data on which this paper is based do have some limitations. First, quantitative questionnaire-based approaches to researching national identities do not have the capacity fully to reflect the complexity and contingency of how such identities are understood and expressed (Condor et al 2006; Karlsen and Nazroo 2015; Mann 2011; Platt 2014), and this point extends to the census as a more specific instrument. It is therefore important that quantitative studies such as this one continue to be complemented by more detailed qualitative work on particular groups and/or locales. Such research might also be more attuned to the 'dialectical' processes involved in national identification, which were discussed earlier.

Second, even compared to other sources of quantitative data on national identity the census has a narrower scope. Some sample surveys include several questions on national identity (see e.g. Karlsen and Nazroo 2015; Nandi and Platt 2015; Platt 2014) and also commonly have a wider suite of variables that can add further dimensions to investigation of the reasons behind variation in national identities among people in minority groups, for example their perceptions and experiences of discrimination (Karlsen and Nazroo 2015; Maxwell 2006; Nandi and Platt 2015; Platt 2014). However, it is also recognized (Bechhofer and McCrone 2007: 253) that large-scale quantitative approaches also make an important contribution to research on national identities, especially when the aim is to compare patterns of identities between and within general populations, for example in comparing different ethnic and religious groups (Karlsen and Nazroo 2015: 19). When the focus is on such minority sub-populations, then especially in those parts of the UK (outside England) where these minorities are inadequately represented in sample surveys, the 2011 census offers an unprecedented and uniquely robust resource. Further, the fact that it also now addresses other markers of national identity (birth, ancestry, residence, language) means that the analytic potential of the census to investigate national identities more generally does not compare particularly unfavourably with other relevant surveys.

While the underlying reasons for varying patterns of sub-state national identification among minorities should doubtless be pursued in further research, the novel analysis of minority groups facilitated by the new census data on national identities demonstrates the importance of examining sub-state as well as state (British) identities, and paying heed to differences in the ways in which

these identities might be conceived and asserted across national borders within the same state.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Not one but three UK censuses actually take place (albeit on the same day and with similar questions): in England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> Religion has been addressed in Northern Ireland since the first post-partition census in 1926.

<sup>3</sup> See *2011 Census Microdata Individual Safeguarded Samples – User Guide* ([http://doc.ukdataservice.ac.uk/doc/7605/mrdoc/pdf/7605safeguardedmicrodatauserguideregandgrouplav10\\_tcm77-390387.pdf](http://doc.ukdataservice.ac.uk/doc/7605/mrdoc/pdf/7605safeguardedmicrodatauserguideregandgrouplav10_tcm77-390387.pdf))

<sup>4</sup> The  $R^2$  values for similar models of *British* identity in each nation, by comparison, are much lower, lying between 0.1 and 0.15.

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**Table 1: British and sub-state national identification by ethno-religious group for adults aged 16+ in Scotland, England, Wales (2011 Census)**

	% identify as <b>British</b>						% identify as <b>Scottish/English/Welsh</b>					
	Scotland	N	England	N	Wales	N	Scotland	N	England	N	Wales	N
<i>Ethno-religious group</i>												
White British etc.	31	201,467	26	1,743,729	26	108,403	87	201,467	82	1,743,611	67	108,403
White Irish	16	2,530	20	24,466	21	701	28	2,530	14	24,465	8	701
White Other: Christian	8	4,140	11	68,841	8	1,686	15	4,140	6	68,839	5	1,686
White Other: No religion	10	2,049	14	21,097	15	507	14	2,049	9	21,096	10	507
Pakistani Muslim	54	1,518	68	34,095	63	347	43	1,518	15	34,087	19	347
Bangladeshi Muslim	48	121	75	13,052	75	310	20	121	7	13,049	13	310
Indian/Other Asian: Muslim	24	238	60	14,069	40	169	16	238	11	14,064	7	169
(Black) African Muslim	28*	170	45	6,314	40	107	16	170	7	6,311	6	107
Arab Muslim	33*	237	45	6,042	29*	279	24	237	8	6,042	5	279
Indian/Other Asian: Hindu	24	645	59	31,880	40	451	15	645	10	31,870	6	451
Indian/Other Asian: Sikh	48	314	67	14,541	64	103	41	314	16	14,538	12	103
Chinese/Other Asian: Buddhist	30*	297	30	6,274	32*	181	15	297	6	6,273	2	181
Chinese: No religion	30*	1,011	36	10,065	29*	409	18	1,011	8	10,065	7	409
(Black) African Christian	23	740	44	24,913	22*	313	14	740	10	24,907	3	313
(Black) Caribbean/ (Other) Black: Christian	46	128	62	23,085	52	153	26**	128	28	23,078	18	153
(Black) Caribbean/ (Other) Black: No religion	37*	83	53	4,373	55	49	46**	83	41	4,371	37	49
Any Asian or Arab Christian	36	707	42	18,898	39	603	27	707	11	18,894	7	603
Mixed White/Black Caribbean	-	-	35	11,463	23*	372	-	-	67	11,463	66*	372
Mixed White/Black African	-	-	38	4,150	26*	132	-	-	36	4,150	51	132
Mixed White/Asian	-	-	47	8,742	46	308	-	-	45	8,740	41	308
Other Mixed	-	-	40	8,337	42	209	-	-	35	8,333	41	209
Mixed (All)	41	558	40	32,692	34	1,021	52	558	49	32,686	51	1,021

**Note:** All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole per cent

\* not significantly different from White British etc. category at  $p < 0.05$

\*\* not significantly different from the corresponding ethno-religious groups in England and Wales at  $p < 0.05$

**Table 2: logistic regression of English identification for adults aged 16+, England (2011 Census)**

	<i>Odds ratio</i>	<i>95% C.I. for odds ratio</i>		<i>N</i>
<i>Ethno-religious group</i> (White British etc.)		<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>	1,743,729
White Irish	0.100	0.096	0.104	24,466
White Other	0.102	0.099	0.105	106,696
Mixed White/Black Caribbean:	0.441	0.423	0.460	11,463
Mixed White/Black African	0.262	0.243	0.282	4,150
Mixed White/Asian	0.270	0.258	0.283	8,742
Mixed Other	0.226	0.214	0.238	8,337
Pakistani Muslim	0.072	0.070	0.075	34,095
Bangladeshi Muslim	0.035	0.033	0.038	13,052
Indian or Other Asian: Muslim	0.072	0.068	0.076	14,069
Black African Muslim	0.078	0.071	0.087	6,314
Arab Muslim	0.091	0.083	0.101	6,042
Indian or Other Asian: Hindu	0.067	0.064	0.070	31,880
Indian or Other Asian: Sikh	0.070	0.066	0.073	14,541
Chinese or Other Asian: Buddhist	0.077	0.069	0.086	6,274
Chinese: No religion	0.087	0.081	0.094	10,065
Black African: Christian	0.086	0.082	0.090	24,913
Any Asian or Arab: Christian	0.115	0.109	0.121	18,898
Black Caribbean or Other Black: Christian	0.135	0.131	0.139	23,085
Black Caribbean or Other Black: No religion	0.173	0.162	0.184	4,373
<i>Birthplace/Residence</i> (Born England)				1,729,493
Born Scotland	0.015	0.014	0.016	34,269
Born N.Ireland	0.023	0.022	0.025	10,053
Born Wales	0.028	0.027	0.029	23,998
Not born UK, resident 70+ years	0.152	0.139	0.166	2,309
Not born UK, resident 61-70 years	0.114	0.108	0.121	6,543
Not born UK, resident 51-60 years	0.109	0.104	0.114	16,616
Not born UK, resident 41-50 years	0.152	0.147	0.158	30,035
Not born UK, resident 31-40 years	0.180	0.174	0.186	28,047
Not born UK, resident 21-30 years	0.175	0.169	0.182	29,090
Not born UK, resident 11-20 years	0.143	0.139	0.148	52,273
Not born UK, resident 8-10 years	0.108	0.103	0.113	30,703
Not born UK, resident 5-7 years	0.060	0.057	0.063	45,026
Not born UK, resident 2-4 years	0.045	0.043	0.048	45,665
Not born UK, resident < 2 years	0.038	0.035	0.040	30,880
<i>Social Class</i> (Higher managerial/professional)				188,442
Lower managerial/professional	1.156	1.140	1.173	455,277
Intermediate	1.520	1.496	1.545	255,715
Small employer or own account worker	1.626	1.597	1.656	197,371
Lower supervisory and technical	1.857	1.821	1.893	156,242
Semi-routine	1.897	1.866	1.928	302,183
Routine	2.083	2.047	2.120	244,830
<i>Age</i>	1.005	1.005	1.005	2,115,184

Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.504$

For each categorical variable the reference category is shown in brackets after the variable name. e.g. *Ethno-religious group* (White British etc.).

**Table 3: logistic regression of Welsh identification for adults aged 16+, Wales (2011 Census)**

	Odds ratio	95% C.I. for odds ratio		N
		Lower	Upper	
<i>Ethno-religious group</i> (White British etc.)				117,115
White Irish	0.180	0.130	0.249	701
White Other	0.232	0.186	0.291	2,493
Mixed White/Black Caribbean:	1.007	0.737	1.377	372
Mixed White/Black African	0.785	0.470	1.311	132
Mixed White/Asian	0.516	0.369	0.720	308
Mixed Other	0.401	0.273	0.591	209
Pakistani Muslim	0.238	0.169	0.337	347
Bangladeshi Muslim	0.130	0.086	0.195	310
Indian or Other Asian: Muslim	0.397	0.204	0.775	169
Black African Muslim	0.158	0.061	0.412	107
Arab Muslim	0.165	0.083	0.326	279
Indian or Other Asian: Hindu	0.181	0.112	0.292	450
Indian or Other Asian: Sikh	0.102	0.050	0.211	103
Chinese or Other Asian: Buddhist	0.052	0.017	0.157	181
Chinese: No religion	0.161	0.100	0.259	409
Black African: Christian	0.283	0.145	0.553	313
Any Asian or Arab: Christian	0.227	0.153	0.338	603
Black Caribbean or Other Black: Christian	0.290	0.168	0.499	153
Black Caribbean or Other Black: No religion	0.326	0.152	0.700	49
<i>Birthplace/Residence</i> (Born Wales)				86,602
Born Scotland	0.011	0.009	0.014	1,139
Born N.Ireland	0.018	0.013	0.025	396
Born England	0.017	0.016	0.018	29,223
Not born UK, resident 70+ years	0.070	0.041	0.120	76
Not born UK, resident 61-70 years	0.028	0.019	0.043	239
Not born UK, resident 51-60 years	0.038	0.028	0.051	455
Not born UK, resident 41-50 years	0.054	0.042	0.069	575
Not born UK, resident 31-40 years	0.073	0.058	0.091	586
Not born UK, resident 21-30 years	0.066	0.052	0.083	590
Not born UK, resident 11-20 years	0.041	0.032	0.052	917
Not born UK, resident 8-10 years	0.025	0.016	0.037	654
Not born UK, resident 5-7 years	0.017	0.012	0.025	1,128
Not born UK, resident 2-4 years	0.006	0.003	0.011	1,199
Not born UK, resident < 2 years	0.012	0.007	0.020	1,024
<i>Social Class</i> (Higher managerial/professional)				8,547
Lower managerial/professional	1.070	0.989	1.158	24,998
Intermediate	1.115	1.023	1.215	13,583
Small employer or own account worker	1.189	1.087	1.300	11,811
Lower supervisory and technical	1.373	1.253	1.505	10,556
Semi-routine	1.248	1.150	1.353	20,209
Routine	1.505	1.383	1.639	16,415
<i>Welsh language proficiency</i> (None)				95,995
Can understand only	2.131	1.957	2.319	6,595
Can speak, read and/or write	3.854	3.639	4.082	22,213
<i>Age</i>	0.999	0.998	1.000	124,803

Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.640$

For each categorical variable the reference category is shown in brackets after the variable name. e.g. *Ethno-religious group* (White British etc.).

**Table 4: logistic regression of Scottish identification for adults aged 16+, Scotland (2011 Census)**

	Odds ratio	95% C.I. for odds ratio		N
		Lower	Upper	
<i>Ethno-religious group</i> (White British etc.)				201,442
White Irish	0.189	0.168	0.214	2,530
White Other	0.213	0.191	0.237	7,002
Mixed	0.647	0.511	0.819	557
Pakistani Muslim	0.342	0.298	0.392	1,518
Bangladeshi Muslim	0.162	0.095	0.274	121
Indian or Other Asian: Muslim	0.226	0.152	0.336	238
African Muslim	0.305	0.198	0.471	170
Arab Muslim	0.413	0.292	0.585	237
Indian or Other Asian: Hindu	0.254	0.196	0.329	645
Indian or Other Asian: Sikh	0.306	0.230	0.408	314
Chinese or Other Asian: Buddhist	0.191	0.133	0.274	297
Chinese: No religion	0.178	0.144	0.218	1,010
African: Christian	0.236	0.186	0.300	740
Any Asian or Arab: Christian	0.297	0.241	0.367	707
Caribbean or Black: Christian	0.231	0.140	0.381	128
Caribbean or Black: No religion	0.461	0.256	0.832	83
<i>Birthplace/Residence</i> (Born Scotland)				178,227
Born England	0.021	0.020	0.022	21,063
Born Northern Ireland	0.015	0.013	0.018	1,762
Born Wales	0.018	0.015	0.022	800
Not born UK, resident 70+ years	0.130	0.097	0.174	207
Not born UK, resident 61-70 years	0.155	0.123	0.194	384
Not born UK, resident 51-60 years	0.107	0.090	0.127	684
Not born UK, resident 41-50 years	0.119	0.104	0.137	1,042
Not born UK, resident 31-40 years	0.122	0.106	0.140	1,132
Not born UK, resident 21-30 years	0.093	0.080	0.107	1,053
Not born UK, resident 11-20 years	0.076	0.068	0.086	1,877
Not born UK, resident 8-10 years	0.055	0.046	0.065	1,103
Not born UK, resident 5-7 years	0.040	0.035	0.046	2,807
Not born UK, resident 2-4 years	0.026	0.023	0.030	3,167
Not born UK, resident < 2 years	0.012	0.010	0.015	2,431
<i>Social Class</i> (Higher managerial/prof.)				18,112
Lower managerial/professional	1.212	1.143	1.286	43,540
Intermediate	1.353	1.268	1.445	28,730
Small employer or own account worker	1.245	1.156	1.340	16,218
Lower supervisory and technical	1.434	1.330	1.546	18,139
Semi-routine	1.655	1.551	1.765	34,321
Routine	1.802	1.683	1.930	29,903
<i>Gaelic language proficiency</i> (None)				213,931
Can understand only	1.813	1.410	2.330	1,059
Can speak, read and/or write	1.727	1.464	2.038	2,749
<i>Scots language proficiency</i> (None)				132,180
Can understand only	1.496	1.401	1.599	12,083
Can speak, read and/or write	2.762	2.655	2.874	73,476
<i>Age</i>	0.996	0.995	0.997	217,739

Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.579$

For each categorical variable the reference category is shown in brackets after the variable name. e.g. *Ethno-religious group* (White British etc.).